

similar to that we had seen at the Boca de la Tortuga. They had assembled to search the sands, for collecting the turtles' eggs, and extracting the oil; but they had unfortunately made a mistake of several days. The young turtles had come out of their shells before the Indians had formed their camp; and consequently the crocodiles and the *garzes*, a species of large white herons, availed themselves of the delay. These animals, alike fond of the flesh of the young turtles, devour an innumerable quantity. They fish during the night, for the *tortuguillos* do not come out of the earth to gain the neighbouring river till after the evening twilight. The zamuro vultures are too indolent to hunt after sunset. They stalk along the shores in the daytime, and alight in the midst of the Indian encampment to steal provisions; but they often find no other means of satisfying their voracity than by attacking young crocodiles of seven or eight inches long, either on land or in water of little depth. It is curious to see the address with which these little animals defend themselves for a time against the vultures. As soon as they perceive the enemy, they raise themselves on their fore paws, bend their backs, and lift up their heads, opening their wide jaws. They turn continually, though slowly, toward their assailant to show him their teeth, which, even when the animal has but recently issued from the egg, are very long and sharp. Often while the attention of a young crocodile is wholly engaged by one of the zamuros, another seizes the favourable opportunity for an unforeseen attack. He pounces on the crocodile, grasps him by the neck, and bears him off to the higher regions of the air. We had an opportunity of observing this manœuvre during several mornings, at Mompex, on the banks of the Magdalena, where we had collected more than forty very young crocodiles, in a spacious court surrounded by a wall.

We found among the Indians assembled at Pararuma some white men, who had come from Angostura to purchase the tortoise-butter. After having wearied us for a long time with their complaints of the 'bad harvest,' and the mischief done by the tigers among the turtles, at the time of laying their eggs, they conducted us beneath an *ajoupa*, that rose in the centre of the Indian camp. We there found the missionary-monks of Carichana and the